

FILED

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Clerk, U.S. District Court
District Of Montana
Great Falls

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**ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA
GREAT FALLS DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

JOHN EDMONSTON,

Defendant.

CR 15-*69*-GF-BMM

INDICTMENT

**CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD THE
UNITED STATES**

**Title 18 U.S.C. § 371 (Count I)
(Penalty: Five years imprisonment,
\$250,000 fine, and three years supervised
release)**

**THEFT OF FEDERAL PROPERTY BY
FRAUD**

**Title 18 U.S.C. § 641 (Count II)
(Penalty: Ten years imprisonment,
\$250,000 fine, and three years supervised
release)**

COUNT I

THE CONSPIRACY AND ITS OBJECTS

That in or about 2014, and continuing thereafter until at least June 2015, at Great Falls, in the State and District of Montana, JOHN EDMONSTON, and other persons, both known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly and intentionally conspire to defraud the United States through (a) improper procurement of new and used property belonging to the United States Air Force; (b) the improper use of government credit cards for personal purchases; and (c) the concealment of these acquisitions and purchases through fraudulent representations, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 641.

MANNER AND MEANS OF THE CONSPIRACY

It was a part of the conspiracy that the defendant would by deceit, craft, trickery and dishonest means, defraud the United States by interfering with and obstructing the lawful governmental functions of the United States Air Force, in that the defendant would acquire both new and used equipment belonging to the United States Air Force, specifically the 341st Logistics Readiness Squadron, by converting government property to personal use after either improperly purchasing items using a government issued credit card or taking items previously purchased with United States Air Force funds.

OVERT ACTS

In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect the objects of the conspiracy, the following overt acts, among others, were committed at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Great Falls, in the State and District of Montana and elsewhere:

- (a) On or about September 30, 2014, EDMONSTON sent an email instructing a co-conspirator to order two welding helmets for “myself and [another co-conspirator]” and that this order “should help deplete the remaining funds.” The order was processed through a co-conspirator’s Government Purchase Card Program (“GPC Card”). EDMONSTON is the account official for the GPC Card.
- (b) On or about October 2, 2014, EDMONSTON sent an email about an upcoming delivery of items and instructed a co-conspirator to take an “electric office heater,” that is “actually a garage heater” if he wanted one. The email discusses how the delivery would hopefully occur at the back door because “[t]he least amount of people seeing it the better.” At the bottom of the email is a list of items to be delivered, including an air compressor, two 5000 watt heaters, a welder, and wood working tools.
- (c) On or about October 6, 2014, EDMONSTON again sent an email telling a co-conspirator to look for the delivery of certain items, including the heaters and a welder. The co-conspirator responded and asked

EDMONSTON if he still wanted the air compressor. EDMONSTON said yes and that another co-conspirator would help him load it when the time comes. EDMONSTON sent another email later in the day stating “[i]f anyone asks....I bought the compressor for fuels since they didn’t have EOY money.”

- (d) On or about October 6, 2014, EDMONSTON sent an email expressing his concern about how the items delivered to the back of the unit were engraved so quickly and how he will “wait until the dust settles and hit it again.”
- (e) On an unknown date, co-conspirators saw EDMONSTON take one of the electric garage heaters and place it in his personal truck, and also saw a garage heater in EDMONSTON’s garage.
- (f) On or about June 2, 2015, an electric garage heater was located in EDMONSTON’s garage at his residence in Great Falls, Montana. Two welder helmets and a welder were also located in EDMONSTON’s garage. Various other tools etched as property of the United States Air Force were found.
- (g) On or about June 2, 2015, three (3) Benchmade knives were located at EDMONSTON’s residence in Great Falls, Montana. On June 24, 2014, a

co-conspirator purchased ten (10) Benchmade knives in Great Falls,
Montana using his GPC Card.

All in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371.

COUNT II

That in or about 2014, and continuing thereafter until on or about June 1,
2015, at Great Falls, in the State and District of Montana, JOHN EDMONSTON,
and other persons, both known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly and
willfully steal, purloin, and knowingly convert to their use, and the use of another,
property of the United States, of a value in excess of \$1,000, in violation of 18
U.S.C. § 641.

A TRUE BILL.

Foreperson signature redacted. Original document filed
under seal.



MICHAEL W. COTTER
United States Attorney

for 

JOSEPH E. THAGGARD
Criminal Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney

Crim. Summons ☒
Warrants ☐
Bills ☐

Arraignment
11/12/15 @ 10:00am
Judge Johnston